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15 August 1986
OCA 86-2823

MEMORANDUM FOR:

C/LG/EPS/DO

STAT

FROM:

Legislation Division
Office of Congressional Affairs

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SUBJECT: Satellite Communication Protection Act

1. Attached for your review and comment is a bill introduced by Representative Coble, which would make it illegal for a person to interfere with the operation of a communication satellite, or hinder or delay the transmission conveyed by a communication satellite. Representative Coble introduced the bill in response to an individual who took over a satellite used by a commercial entity (HBO) in order to broadcast a message to television viewers.

2. While the bill is not intended to cover governmental activities, the broad language in the bill has caused some concern in DoD and NSA. DoD is concerned that the bill not be interpreted to cover the destruction of Soviet satellites through the use of Anti-Satellite weapons launched in a war with the Soviets. NSA also has expressed concern about the possible impact of the bill on collection of intelligence from satellites. However, NSA's concern has been eased somewhat by the fact that the bill does not prohibit the interception of satellite transmissions. NSA and DoD have indicated that they will attempt to obtain legislative history that specifies that the bill is not intended to cover governmental activities, e.g., collection of intelligence or destruction of communication satellites by DoD forces.

3. The bill has been circulated within DS&T and they have determined that the bill would not impact on any activity being conducted by that Directorate. I would appreciate the views of the DO as to whether the bill would impact on any DO intelligence activity. The bill is on a fast track, and therefore it is important that I receive your comments within two weeks.

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Attachment as
stated

LEGI-SLATE Report for 99th Congress Wednesday, August 13, 1986 2:05pm (EDT)

Report for H.R.4983 Satellite Communications Protection Act of 1986
As introduced in the House
Complete Text of this version

99th CONGRESS
2d Session

H. R. 4983

To amend chapter 65 of title 18, United States Code, to provide a criminal penalty for interference with satellite communications.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 11, 1986

Mr. Coble (for himself and Mr. Frank) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To amend chapter 65 of title 18, United States Code, to provide a criminal penalty for interference with satellite communications.

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Satellite Communications Protection Act of 1986".

SEC. 2. CRIMINAL PENALTY FOR INTERFERENCE WITH SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS.

Chapter 65 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"Sec. 1365. Interference with satellite communications:

"Whoever willfully or maliciously interferes with the operation of a communications satellite or obstructs, hinders, or delays any transmission conveyed by means of a communications satellite shall be fined in accordance with this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both."

LEBI-2LATE Report

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SEC. 3. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.

The table of sections for chapter 65 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:
"1365. Interference with satellite communications.".
